



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

January 10, 2000

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

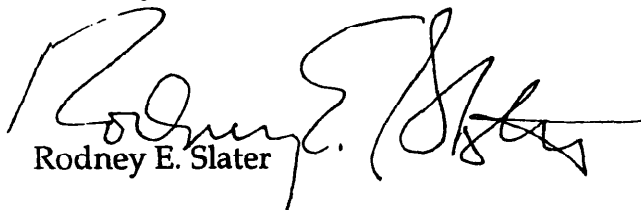
Dear Senator Crapo:

Thank you for your letter of December 8, 1999, regarding the **concerns** of your constituents who are owners of travel agencies. You note in your letter that the American Society of Travel Agents (**ASTA**) has recently filed a formal complaint (Docket **OST-99-6410**) with this Department against a number of **airlines**. **ASTA** alleges that in cutting the commissions that they pay travel agents, the airlines are engaging in unfair practices and unfair methods of competition in violation of **49 U.S.C. §41712**.

The airlines filed their responses to **ASTA's** complaint on December 10. It is now up to our Enforcement Office to review the complaint and **responses** and determine whether, under our statute, the complaint should be pursued or dismissed. Under these circumstances, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the substance of your letter. Your staff and your constituents can track the pleadings as well as the Department's actions through our Dockets web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Clicking on "search" and then typing "**6410**" in the space for the docket number and again clicking on "search" will bring up a list of all documents in the docket. Each item can be opened.

The Department's *ex parte* rules, **14 CFR Part 300**, require that I place your letter and a copy of this reply in Docket **OST-99-6410**.

Sincerely,

  
Rodney E. Slater

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DOCKETS  
00 FEB 29 PM 4:53

MIKE CRAPO  
U.S. SENATOR  
IDAHO

CO CHAIRMAN, WESTERN WATER CAUCUS

111 RUSSELL  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-6142

Internet/e-mail:  
<http://craposenate.gov>

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 1999

### COMMITTEES.

#### ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

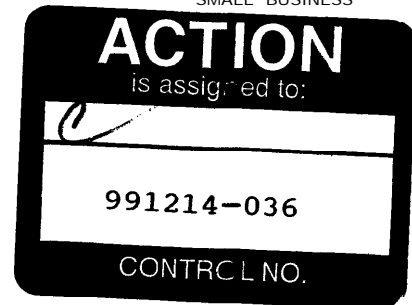
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE,  
AND DRINKING WATER, CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SUPERFUND,  
WASTE CONTROL, AND RISK ASSESSMENT

BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE,  
VICE CHAIR

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

SMALL BUSINESS



The Honorable Rodney E. Slater  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation  
400 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Slater:

It is my understanding that the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) has recently filed a formal complaint to Department of Transportation (DOT) against the commercial airline industry. Several travel agency owners in Idaho have contacted me regarding this action.

According to the ASTA and its member travel agents, commercial airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business. As you know, travel agents provide the traveling public with valuable information on air travel options and airline data. This information assists travelers in making the most informed decision possible. ASTA members fear that the unfair methods of competition used by the airlines, may force them out of business and permit the airlines to inflate their prices, thus harming consumers or placing them at a disadvantage.

Therefore, I request that the DOT give appropriate and timely consideration to the complaint. Please keep me informed of the actions taken by the DOT to address the ASTA complaint. Thank you for your attention to the matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

MC/vjc

BOISE  
304 North 8th Street  
Room 338  
Boise, ID 83702

CALDWELL  
704 Blaine Street  
Suite 1  
Caldwell, ID 83605

COEUR D'ALENE  
1000 N.W. Boulevard  
Suite 100  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

IDAHO FALLS  
490 Memorial Drive  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

LEWISTON  
111 Main Street  
Suite 140  
Lewiston, ID 83501

MOSCOW  
220 East 5th Street  
Room 105  
Moscow, ID 83848

POCATELLO  
801 E. Sherman  
Pocatello, ID 83201

TWIN FALLS  
202 Falls Avenue  
Suite 2  
Twin Falls, ID 83301



# Total Travel Service

22 MADISON SQUARE DRIVE • P.O. BOX 1261  
MADISONVILLE, KENTUCKY 42431  
PHONE (502) 821-1692 • FAX (502) 821-1927

November 10, 1999

The Honorable  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 205 10

Dear Senator:

Please save my business from airline unfair competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up agents' costs with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or my trade association, ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

Look forward to hearing from you soon

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Boal  
Total Travel Service



10 November 1999

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U. S. Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator:

Please save my business from airline unfair competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up agents' costs with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the best, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or the trade association; ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

Sincerely,

Kathy Schaffrick  
Owner